4 March 2008

Ian,

The long awaited Series C3830 file from Australian Archives arrived today. If we had this 2 years ago it may have added to the radar article which you published. I am passing it on to you in the event that at some later date it might be useful to you.

C3830 comprises copies of correspondence during the period 7/8/1941 to 15/11/1941 between various persons regarding the selection, training and utilisation of Naval personnel in RDF (Radio Direction Finding).

The correspondents include:

The Secretary to the R.A.N.
The Chairman Radio Physics Board Chippendale (Sydney University) Dr F White,
Chief of the Division of Radio Physics Dr DF Martyn
ViceAdmiral Sir Guy Royle
A person named NS Alexander writing from Raffles College Singapore
Dr. Owen Pulley at Radio Development Wellington NZ
Lt Commander GC Whitaker RNZN

The main thrust of the correspondence is to identify 3 officers to be trained in RDF. One was the aforementioned Whitaker recommended by Pulley and Alexander, another was a S/Lt Palfrey recommended by Guy Royle. Palfrey is mentioned in a letter dated 10/9/1941 by Dr White as quote “would make a good third to the two engineering graduates” unquote. The second graduate is not named in the correspondence, and the first is probably Whitaker.

The correspondence started with a Most Secret letter dated 7/8/1941 from the Secretary to the Naval Board adressed to The Rear Admiral Commanding the Australian Squadron, referencing a letter dtaed 30/5/1941 (not in this file) quote “ in which the initial fitting-out programme for R D/F in H.M.A. Ships is proposed” unquote. Paragraph 2 of this 8/8/1941 letter identifies the requirement for two officers suitably trained in R D/F.This then apparently prompts Dr White to prepare a circular to 4th year Engineering students seeking volunteers to be trained as R.D.F Specialist Sub Lieutenants. What fascinates me is that the Navy is treating this matter as Most Secret, and Dr White advertises to all and sundry that the Navy is active in R.D.F.

Last paragraph of the letter 13/8/1941 to White from Martyn has a reference to H.M.A.S. Perth.

How was the cruise?

Cheers,

George